



## ISSUE BRIEF

# California's Family Preservation and Support Services

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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**NEW FEDERAL LEGISLATION**

In August 1993, the President signed into law the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993, which provides approximately \$1 billion over five years to fund the Family Preservation and Support Act. Funds for the child welfare services fall under Title IV-B of the Social Security Act to supplement the existing Child Welfare service programs designed to keep families intact and to avoid unnecessary foster care and other out-of-home placements. The use of these funds must be congruent with the federal guidelines for Family Preservation.

Family Preservation Services help families (including adoptive or extended families) at risk or in crisis. Family Preservation includes such services as respite care for families in need of temporary relief, child care, and education for families at risk of abuse or neglect. These services are usually short term, intense, and designed to reduce out of home placement of children.

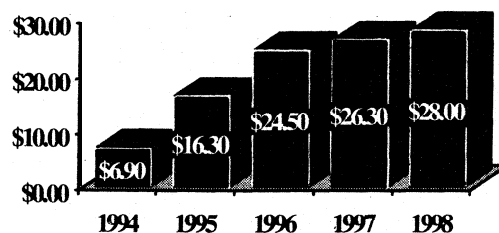
Family Support Services are designed to promote the well being of children and families, increase the strength and stability of families, increase confidence and competence in parenting abilities, afford children a stable and supportive family environment, and enhance child development. These goals are carried out by respite care of children, in-home visits, drop-in centers, support groups, and other services.

**Federal Funding**

Expenditures for Child Welfare Service Programs in California have more than tripled since 1982 in response to increasing reports of children abused and neglected.

The funding will enable each state to develop, establish, or expand, a variety of family support services. Nearly \$1 billion (\$930 million) has been allocated in capped entitlements to states and tribal organizations over the next five years. Because of size and population, California will receive more funding for Family Preservation and Support than any other state.

**California's Funding  
(in millions)**



Portions of these federal funds are to be set aside for:

- Tribal Organizations
- Administration Costs
- Research, Evaluation, and Technical Assistance
- State Courts Proceeding Evaluation

**CALIFORNIA'S ROLE**

California will receive \$6.9 million in 1994. In order to receive Federal Fiscal year 1994 funds, the following must occur:

- Family Preservation and Support Program (FPSP) application is due no later than June 30, 1994.
- California must complete and submit a five year plan to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) a five-year plan by June 30, 1995.
- California must include, public and non-profit agencies, Tribal organizations, parents, consumers, and other organizations and advocates.

**State Pilot Programs**

Presently 16 counties operate state funded Family Preservation programs throughout California. The programs are community based and designed to meet the needs of those communities. Their function is to provide families with:

- Services to limit out of home placement,
- Supportive services when children are returned to the family unit or when a minor is with in jurisdiction of the juvenile court.

- Counseling and support that are designed to “eradicate the situation that necessitated intervention.”

### Focus on Child Care Services

Child Care is an essential portion of family preservation. The child death rate is highest for children in the 0-5 year, age group. This group also comprises the highest percentage of children placed in foster care in California and the largest percentage who stay in foster care the longest. These children are at risk of abuse, neglect, and infant death due to lack of care. Children who are in school, generally over the age of 5, are in the presence of someone who will care for their needs by reporting signs of abuse, while children who are under 5 years of age are often in isolation. As Peter Digre and Marjorie Kelly suggested in the November 1993 Child Development Programs Advisory Committee meeting, **“Family Preservation and Support Services should center around child care.”** Child care is critical for prevention and protection of children under five years old who do not attend school. Child care insures the child’s safety, but also reduces the stress of potentially strained and abusive primary caretakers.

Current Family Preservation programs provide numerous child care opportunities for families at risk, or in need of help. Various programs such as in- and out- of home respite care, child care during emergencies, and during scheduled parenting classes, are provided. To preserve the family, services must be sensitive to the needs of the children. Child care is a necessary commitment of family preservation to alleviate parental stress, protect the children from abuse and neglect, and to allow parental time to search for employment, or to upgrade their education.

### SUMMARY

- The President has signed into law funding that would provide \$1 billion over five years to fund programs for the protection of abused and neglected children and preservation of families at risk of separation.
- California will receive \$6 million in 1994 and this amount will increase to \$28 million in 1998.
- Portions of this funding will be set aside for research and evaluation, state courts proceeding evaluation, tribal organizations, and administration costs.
- California must apply for the funds available, as well as a description of the process California will use to develop its five year plan.
- Because child care often protects children from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, California should actively involve child care in their plan for Family Preservation and Support Services.

### References:

1. Hill, Elizabeth, B. (Legislative Analyst), *Child Abuse and Neglect: A Review Of The Child Welfare Services Program*. California State Government Document, January 1991.
2. Matsui, Robert- Congressman, Press Release: *Child Welfare, Foster Care, and Adoption Assistance*. August 1993.
3. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on children, Youth and Families. *Program instruction for Family Preservation and Support Services*. April 1994.
4. Werner, Emmy E. Ph.D., *Commentary: A Social Policy Perspective*. U.C. Davis, 1993.
5. The Family Preservation Approach in Los Angeles County. October 1993.
6. Welfare and Institutions Code 16500.5.

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